

Testimony in Support of House Bill 4598

A Bill to Establish Licensure for Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs)

House Regulatory Reform Committee, June 10, 2015

Chairman Franz and members of the House Regulatory Reform Committee: I appreciate this opportunity to speak in support of House Bill 4598.

While I presently serve as a Lecturer in Law at Michigan State University College of Law, I am not here today to offer legal analysis on the bill. I'm here simply as a dad.

I live in Saline, Michigan with my wife Antoinette and our four children: Vincent (age 15), Sophia (age 14), Dominic (age 12), and Anthony (age 10). Antoinette gave birth to all four children at home, under the supervision of midwives.

When Vincent was born in 1999, Antoinette and I were living in South Carolina. In selecting the midwife who would ultimately attend Vincent's birth, the safety of both Antoinette and the little one to come was our core concern. Other than the references from friends that we had received regarding our midwife, we were assured as to her training and competence because she was licensed to practice midwifery by the State of South Carolina.

One year later, when we relocated to Michigan, our daughter Sophia was already on the way. We were determined to have the same wonderful home-birth experience that we had with Vincent, and we set about the task of finding a midwife. As it had been the previous year, the safety of Antoinette and the little one to come was our core concern. Unlike in South Carolina, however, there was no licensure of midwives in Michigan. How could we know that the people in whose hands we were placing the safety of our family were trained professionals?

As it turned out, we eventually connected with the wonderful midwives at New Moon Midwifery in Ann Arbor. And with them to support us, we were able to experience the safe and peaceful birth at home not just of Sophia, but of Dominic and Anthony as well.

In retrospect, we made an excellent decision by choosing our midwives notwithstanding that there was no mechanism in place through which they could be licensed by the State of Michigan. But many couples—especially those who have not already experienced a home birth—might determine that they simply cannot place their trust in someone who lacks such a credential. It is a shame to think that they would be deprived of the same profound security and joy of home birth that my family experienced. To the extent that the licensing regime of House Bill 4598 would provide needed assurance to families considering home birth, I urge that the members of the committee endorse it.

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